

Background

International students have a tremendous impact on the communities in which they live, study and work and also contribute significant economic benefits to Australia. This export value includes the combination of fees and living expenses that international students provide to the Australian economy which, in 2018, amounted to \$34 billion.

This figure however only accounts for a small number of benefits provided by international students. It also does not reflect the ultimate impact international students have on the economy, as it does not take into account the various adjustments that occur as revenue from students is removed or introduced to a region.

This project was developed in response to a recognised need for a clearer way of accounting for the economic benefits of international students in Australia, particularly at a regional level. The key rationale behind it includes:

1. The benefits from international students are underappreciated
2. Policy intervention requires more granular and robust data
3. Lack of consistent reporting undermines validity and reliability.

The pilot tool, which was developed using Computational General Equilibrium (CGE) model (see Final Report page 11 and 12 for detailed reasoning) uses a range of economic principles not widely understood by international education professionals – let alone the wider community. As such, whilst the data it produces will be instrumental to understanding the impact of international education in regions across Australia, it is recommended that, in its current form, access is limited to those approved by the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE). These pilot users may include state government or study cluster representatives (as per those represented on the project working group) and education peak bodies (upon request).

Longer term, and based on feedback from the pilot, there is a need to develop a more simplified model fit for a general audience. This dissemination plan outlines a suggested approach to drawing some of the top-level data from the pilot, and re-purposing it for wider distribution in a more user-friendly format¹. Subject to additional funding, it would include development of an engaging and interactive web application – combined with video, graphs and insights – to highlight the economic value of international students, region by region.

This would form part of a planned extension of IEAA's '[Broaden our horizons](#)' project, which

¹ This plan focuses on the audiences and key channels for dissemination, rather than further development of the tool itself.

The regional economic impact of international students in Australia

Stage 3: Disseminating the results



aims to better communicate the benefits of the international education sector to the Australian community.

Key audiences

- Education peak bodies
- State and territory governments
- Education providers
- Local councils and the wider community.

Dissemination plan and key channels

KEY ACTIONS	AUDIENCE	CHANNEL
1. Embed interactive web application, videos and graphs into the existing ' Broaden our horizons ' website.	Employers, Local councils, wider community	Broaden our horizons platform.
2. Disseminate to IEAA's extensive network of international education stakeholders (10,000+)	IEAA members/ non-members (education providers, peak bodies, Government)	Various channels (EDMs, website, social media etc.)
3. Share interactive platform at face-to-face meetings of state and territory international education advisory bodies.	Various (StudyNSW IEAB, StudyQLD IETAG etc).	Face-to-face
4. Amplify content via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Austrade • State and territory study clusters • International Education Marketing Forum (IEMF) • Education peak bodies. • Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE). 	International education sector stakeholders	Various.
5. Target local councils and community groups via social media.	Local councils, community groups, wider community.	Social media (paid and organic), re-targeting

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Next steps

Initial feedback from the pilot tool has shown there is a need to develop a more simplified model fit for a general audience. Should DESE agree to the principles of the pilot tool, IEAA would seek additional funding to develop an engaging and interactive web application – combined with video, graphs and insights – to highlight the economic value of international students (region by region) in an accessible and easy-to-digest format. This material would be disseminated as per the key audiences and channels outlined above.